



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH HERTEL  
DIRECTOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 23, 2021

**CONTACT:** Chelsea Wuth  
517-241-2112  
[WuthC@michigan.gov](mailto:WuthC@michigan.gov)

### **MDHHS expanding mobile services to Ingham, Kent and Muskegon counties to help reach vulnerable populations**

LANSING, Mich. – In an effort to reach more Michiganders in need of COVID-19 testing and other public health services, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is expanding its partnership with Ingham, Kent and Muskegon counties to provide mobile COVID-19 testing, vaccines and PPE along with other social services.

“Every Michigander should have access to fundamental public health services regardless of their zip code, and expanding mobile health services across the state will bring us a step closer to making that a reality,” said Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist. “These mobile units are a product of the Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities — which I am proud to chair — and have been widely successful in advancing racial equity as we fight COVID-19. I look forward to seeing this partnership provide services where they are most needed in Ingham, Kent and Muskegon Counties.”

There are a total of six operational mobile units in Michigan supported by this initiative serving rural and urban communities. Mobile units visit community centers, churches and other community locations to reach as far as possible to assist Michigan residents who may not have transportation or live in a community without public transportation. Many residents of communities served would not have access to services if those services were unable to be placed as conveniently as possible for them.

MDHHS partnered with Gorno Ford to help pilot the program by outfitting the mobile vehicles and helped orient local health department staff with their new mobile units.

“The most effective public health efforts happen when we take resources to where people are and make services easily accessible,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MDHHS chief medical executive and chief deputy for health. “The expansion of these mobile clinics means more access to COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, and other healthcare services, and are so important as we enter a new phase of fighting this pandemic.”

“The reality is that not everyone has access to a primary care provider and public health has long worked to fill those gaps by providing health care services to those in need,” said Christopher Bendekgey, Kent County Community Clinical Services Division Director. “This last 16 months has been no different. The pandemic brought upon many challenges to health care providers and public health alike, however, through the use of the mobile health van, we have been able to bring COVID testing and vaccinations to many who may not otherwise had access, particularly in those communities who have been disproportionately impacted during the pandemic.”

“Since the Ingham County Health Department acquired its mobile health unit three months ago, it has become a critical component of our outreach to communities and populations with low access to health care and low vaccination rates,” said Ingham County Health Officer Linda S. Vail. “We have visited more than 40 unique sites, returning to most for second doses, in addition to vaccinating homebound residents. This high level of outreach would not be possible without this vital partnership with MDHHS.”

Michigan residents seeking more information about the COVID-19 vaccine can visit [Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine](https://Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine). The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://CDC.gov/Coronavirus).

###